IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A. distributed switching platform couplable to an Internet Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

a main control unit (MCU) couplable to said IP network and configured to generate call and control processing commands;

a switching partition couplable to said IP network and including:

an input-output distributor (IOD) configured to receive said call and control processing commands in a packet based protocol, and

a circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to said IOD and configured to provide a sole interface between a plurality of access nodes and said MCU, said IOD configured to convey said call and control processing commands to said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to allow, based thereon, said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to control access to said plurality of access nodes, wherein each connection between said access nodes and said MCU traverses said circuit-switched matrix and line interface.

2. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein said MCU and said switching partition are adapted to communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP)

3. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein said MCU and said switching partition are geographically separable.

4. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein ones of said plurality of access

nodes are selected from the group consisting of:

a digital instrument;

an analog instrument;

a digital trunk; and

an analog trunk.

5. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 further comprising an application server couplable to andconfigured to communicate with said MCU.

6. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein said MCU is a primary MCU,

said distributed switching platform further comprising a secondary MCU couplable to said IP network.

7. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 6 wherein said primary and secondary MCUs are geographically separable.

8. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 6 wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCUs is configured to provide said call and control processing commands at any time, said one of said primary and secondary MCUs being in control of said distributed switching platform.

9. (Original) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 8 wherein said one of said primary and secondary MCUs which is in control of said distributed switching platform is configured to update a database associated with said other one of said primary and secondary MCUs.

10. (Previously Presented) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 further comprising a second switching partition couplable to said IP network and including:

a second IOD, and

a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to said second IOD and configured to provide an interface to additional access nodes.

11. (Previously Presented) A method of operating a distributed switching platform coupled to an Internet Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

generating call and control processing commands with a main control unit (MCU) coupled to said IP network;

coupling an input-output distributor (IOD) to said IP network;

providing a sole interface between a plurality of access nodes and said MCU via a circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to said IOD, said IOD receiving said call and control processing commands in a packet based protocol and conveying said call and control processing commands to said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to allow said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to control access to aid plurality of access nodes, wherein each connection between said access nodes and said MCU traverses said circuit-switched matrix and line interface.

12. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said MCU and said IOD communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP).

13. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said MCU and said IOD are geographically separated.

14. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein ones of said plurality of access nodes are selected from the group consisting of:

a digital instrument;

an analog instrument;

a digital trunk; and

an analog trunk.

15. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 further comprising 2

coupling an application server to said MCU.

16. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said MCU is a primary MCU, said distributed switching platform further comprising a secondary MCU coupled to said IP network.

17. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 16 wherein said primary 2 and secondary MCUs are geographically separated.

18. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 16 wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCUs provides said call and control processing commands at any time, said one of said primary and secondary MCUs being in control of said distributed switching platform.

19. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 18 further comprising updating a database associated with at least one of said one of said primary and secondary MCUs.

20. (Previously Presented)The method as recited in Claim 11 further comprising:

coupling a second IOD to said IP network; and

providing an interface to additional access nodes via a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to said second IOD.

21. (Previously Presented) A distributed switching platform means coupled to an Internet Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

a main control unit (MCU) means, coupled to said IP network, that generates call and control processing commands;

a switching partition means coupled to said IP network and including:

an input-output distributor (IOD) means configured to receive said call and control processing commands in a packet based protocol, and

a circuit-switched matrix and line interface means, coupled to said IOD, that provides a sole interface between a plurality of access nodes and said MCU means, said IOD means conveying said call and control processing commands to said circuit-switched matrix and line interface means to allow, based thereon, said circuit-switched matrix and line interface means to control access to said plurality of access nodes.

22. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 21 wherein said MCU means and said switching partition means are adapted to communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP).

23. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 21 wherein said MCU means and said switching partition means are geographically separable.

24. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 21 wherein ones of said plurality of access nodes are selected from the group consisting of:

a digital instrument;

an analog instrument;

a digital trunk; and

an analog trunk.

25. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 21 further comprising an application server means coupled to said MCU.

26. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 21 wherein said MCU means is a primary MCU means, said distributed switching platform means further comprising a secondary MCU means coupled to said IP network.

27. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 26 wherein said primary and secondary MCU means are geographically separated.

28. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 26 wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCU means provides said call and control processing commands at any time, said one of said primary and secondary MCU means being in control of said distributed switching platform means.

29. (Original) The distributed switching platform means as recited in Claim 28 wherein said one of said primary and secondary MCU means which is in control of said distributed switching `platform means updates a database means associated with said other one of said primary and secondary MCU means.

30. (Previously Presented) The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 21 further comprising a second switching partition means coupled to said IP network and including:

a second IOD means, and

a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface means, coupled to said second IOD means, that provides an interface to additional access nodes.

31. (Previously Presented) An enterprise call center coupled to an Internet Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

a primary main control unit (MCU) coupled to a first location associated with said IP network;

a secondary MCU coupled to a second location associated with said IP network, at least one of said primary and secondary MCUs generating call and control processing commands;

a first switching partition coupled to said IP network and including:

an input-output distributor (IOD) configured to receive said call and control processing commands in a packet based protocol; and

a circuit-switched matrix and line interface, coupled to said IOD, that provides a sole interface between a plurality of access nodes and said primary and secondary MCUs, said IOD conveying said call and control processing commands to said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to allow, based thereon, said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to control access to said plurality of access nodes, wherein each connection between said access nodes and said MCU traverses said circuit-switched matrix and line interface.

32. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein said primary and secondary MCUs and said first switching partition communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP).

33. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein said first switching partition is coupled to a third location associated with said IP network.

34. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein ones of said plurality of access nodes are selected from the group consisting of:

a digital instrument;

an analog instrument;

a digital trunk; and

an analog trunk.

35. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 further comprising an application server coupled to at least one of said primary and secondary MCUs.

36. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCUs provides said call and control processing commands at any time, said one of said primary and secondary MCUs being in control of said enterprise call center.

37. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 36 wherein said one of said primary and secondary MCUs which is in control of said enterprise call center updates a database associated with said other one of said primary and secondary MCUs.

38. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein said enterprise call center is coupled to a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) via one of said plurality of access nodes.

39. (Previously Presented) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 further comprising a second switching partition coupled to said IP network, including:

a second IOD, and

a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface, coupled to said second IOD, that provides an interface to additional access nodes.

40. (Original) The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein at least one of said primary and secondary MCUs and said switching partition are embodied in a sequence of instructions executable on a general purpose computer system.

41. (New) A call processing system, comprising:

a main control unit (MCU) coupled to an IP network;

a switching partition coupled to the IP network and including:

an input-output distributor (IOD); and

a circuit switched matrix and line interface coupled to said IOD and configured to provide a sole interface between a plurality of access nodes and said MCU;

wherein the MCU, the switching partition, and the access nodes interact within a single private branch exchange.

42. (New) The call processing system of claim 41, wherein the private branch exchange is a distributed private branch exchange.

43. (New) The call processing system of claim 41, wherein the IOD conveys call and control processing commands to the circuit switched matrix and line interface to control access to the plurality of access nodes.